



# PANHANDLE

BENEWAH, BONNER, BOUNDARY, KOOTENAI, & SHOSHONE COUNTIES

## EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Job losses at manufacturing businesses in Kootenai County and neighboring Spokane County, Washington, where many Panhandle residents work, pushed the Panhandle seasonally adjusted unemployment rate from 7.3 percent in March to 8.0 percent in April. The unemployment rate jump forcefully made the point that the economic malaise that began in early 2001 continues to plague the Panhandle, as it does the nation. The unemployment rate may understate the current troubles in the labor market. It does not reflect many scenarios, such as people who lose jobs and then became independent contractors or started businesses that may not bring income near the wages they lost, people who are forced to accept early retirement, people whose work hours have been cut, people who are forced to accept part-time jobs when they would prefer full-time work, and people who take jobs for which they are overqualified. In addition, the unemployment rate does not include *discouraged workers*—workers who would like to work but have given up looking for work because job opportunities currently are limited. Because of discouraged workers dropping out of the labor force, the Panhandle's labor force fell from 92,720 in April 2002 to 92,140 a year later, even though the population continued to grow.

The number of *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* in the Panhandle grew only 0.6 percent between April 2002 and April 2003, with most of the growth coming from private-sector *Health Care* providers; community hospitals in *Government Administration*; real estate firms, mortgage brokers, and other businesses in *Financial Activities* that are thriving because of the residential construction boom; and a variety of *Other Services*. For more details, see Panhandle Table 1.

## AREA DEVELOPMENTS

### Benewah County

- The Coeur d'Alene Tribe recently received a \$2.8 million federal grant to build a community technology center and offer broadband services to reservation residents. The technology center will be built near the tribe's headquarters in Plummer. Everyone who lives on the reservation, not just tribal members, will benefit from the technology center and broadband access. In addition to the center, broadband communication services will be provided to Benewah Medical Center, local schools, and other critical community facilities. The tribe also will develop a web portal to provide tribal members information about tribal government and local services. It may be used to teach and preserve the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's language, history, and culture. More than 6,700 people live on the reservation that covers most of western Benewah County and southern Kootenai County.
- The Hilltop Cedar shake mill near St. Maries was destroyed by fire May 25. Hilltop Cedar employs seven people. In addition to making shakes, Hilltop Cedar makes posts and rails. It is not known at this time whether the mill will reopen.

Panhandle Table 1: Labor Force & Employment

	April 2003*	March 2003	April 2002	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
<b>INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE</b>					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	92,480	91,680	92,920	0.9	-0.5
Unemployed	7,420	6,690	8,130	10.9	-8.7
% of Labor Force Unemployed	8.0	7.3	8.7		
Total Employment	85,060	84,990	84,790	0.1	0.3
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	92,140	90,760	92,720	1.5	-0.6
Unemployed	8,850	9,050	9,550	-2.2	-7.3
% of Labor Force Unemployed	9.6	10.0	10.3		
Total Employment	83,290	81,710	83,170	1.9	0.1
<b>JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK</b>					
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS</b>	67,250	65,930	66,840	2.0	0.6
<b>Goods-Producing Industries</b>	11,760	11,630	11,920	1.1	-1.3
Natural Resources & Mining	1,050	1,310	1,040	-19.8	1.0
Construction	4,060	3,620	4,050	12.2	0.2
Manufacturing	6,650	6,700	6,830	-0.7	-2.6
Wood Product Manufacturing	2,710	2,750	2,820	-1.5	-3.9
Other Manufacturing	3,940	3,950	4,010	-0.3	-1.7
<b>Service-Providing Industries</b>	55,490	54,300	54,920	2.2	1.0
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	12,840	12,870	12,970	-0.2	-1.0
Wholesale Trade	1,350	1,290	1,340	4.7	0.7
Retail Trade	9,910	9,900	10,060	0.1	-1.5
Utilities	380	360	370	5.6	2.7
Transportation & Warehousing	1,200	1,320	1,200	-9.1	0.0
Information	1,270	1,270	1,290	0.0	-1.6
Financial Activities	2,900	2,900	2,740	0.0	5.8
Professional & Business Services	6,570	6,280	6,580	4.6	-0.2
Educational & Health Services	6,800	6,760	6,530	0.6	4.1
Leisure & Hospitality	8,060	7,340	8,140	9.8	-1.0
Other Services	2,340	2,280	2,180	2.6	7.3
Government Education	5,230	5,230	5,180	0.0	1.0
Government Administration	8,480	8,370	8,340	1.3	1.7
Government Tribes	1,000	1,000	970	0.0	3.1

\* Preliminary estimate

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

- Plummer, a city of 1,000 on the Coeur d'Alene Reservation along Highway 95, recently received a \$500,000 Idaho Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to upgrade its sewage system.

### **Bonner County**

- The City of Sandpoint recently received a \$500,000 CDBG toward a \$1 million facelift for its downtown, including new sidewalks, curbs, and lights, and the development of a town square with a fountain at Main Street and Third Avenue. A local improvement district and a resort sales tax will help pay the costs not covered by the grant. Construction is slated to begin in July.
- Sandpoint Furniture/Carpet One recently opened the Sandpoint Furniture Clearance Center at the Bonner Mall in Ponderay. It continues to operate its 58-year-old, 30,000-square-foot retail store at 401 Bonner Mall Way in Ponderay. The new 2,500-square-foot store, located across from GNC (General Nutrition Center), features furniture and carpets that have been discounted, closed out by the factory, repossessed, or slightly damaged. It's open three days each week.

### **Kootenai County**

- Costco plans to build a 135,000-square-foot warehouse store north of Neider Avenue between Fourth Street and Government Way in Coeur d'Alene. It plans to hire about 250 people when it opens in early 2004. It will be the Panhandle's first Costco store.
- Advanced Relational Technologies (ART) is anticipating strong sales growth after it introduces a new home version of its computer-aided drafting program for designing homes this summer. The company's program for professionals, Chief Architect, is an industry leader. ART's new software for home design and architecture will be easy to use for home users to create visions of their dream homes, and will be named Better Homes and Gardens Home Designer under a licensing agreement between ART and *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine. ART currently is adding 10 employees, bringing its employment up to 45. It recently moved from a smaller space in downtown Coeur d'Alene into a 12,000-square-foot space on the first floor of the Hecla Mining building at 6500 North Mineral Drive.
- Walgreens plans to open a drugstore in Post Falls by November. It soon will break ground on a 14,400-square-foot store at the southwest corner of Seltice Way and Idaho Street, near the Kootenai Medical Center clinic. Walgreen's opened its first store in the Idaho Panhandle last year at the intersection of Highway 95 and Appleway in Coeur d'Alene. About 30 people will work at the Post Falls store.
- Coeur d'Alene recently welcomed these new businesses: Colorflex Bedliners, a company that sprays polyurethane coating on pickup truck beds to line them, at 4930 West Industrial Way; Passions by the Lake, a boutique selling artwork and specialty foods created by Panhandle residents, at 412 Sherman Avenue, Suite 104; Essence Photography, a studio specializing in black-and-white portraits, at 802 North Fourth

Street; Chantilly Lace, a full-service beauty salon and teahouse that also sells vintage hats and jewelry, at 505 Third Street; i.c. sweets, serving frozen custard ice cream, espresso, hot dogs, and other treats, at 602 East Sherman Avenue; Blue Rose Tattoo & Body Piercing at 510 North Fourth Street; Gladys Marie's Tea Shoppe & Gifts, a gift store with a drive-through for espresso and tea, at 1842 North Government Way; Market Café & Bakery, a restaurant serving organic foods and a sister business of Pilgrim's Natural Food, at 1401 North Fourth Street; Los Sanchez, a Mexican restaurant serving breakfast through dinner, in the former Godfather's Pizza building at 2605 North Fourth Street; The Marketing Department, a company that makes and distributes catalogs directing people to websites for products and services offered by its clients, at Lincoln Way and River Avenue; gForse Bikes, selling and repairing bicycles, at 1306 Best Avenue; Management Recruiters of Coeur d'Alene, an executive search firm that helps companies find management, engineering, and technical professionals, at 1621 North Third Street; Furniture Showroom, a warehouse-style retail store featuring home furniture, at 1311 Sherman Avenue; and Sacred Grounds, an espresso stand also offering drive-through weddings conducted by owner Reverend Al Peterson, at 356 East Appleway.

- New businesses in Kootenai County include Twin Lakes Realty at 14777 W. Highway 53 in Rathdrum; Greywolf Massage at 21 Commerce Drive in Hayden; Express Personnel Services, providing temporary staffing and permanent placement services for clerical, labor, professional, and technical occupations, at 1810 Schneidmiller Avenue Suite 220 in Post Falls; Garden Shack, providing landscaping and gardening supplies including topsoil, bushes, trees, and stones at 6808 West Seltice Way in Post Falls; The Seltice Marketplace, offering miniature golf, indoor soccer, go-carts, and a flea market at 3421 West Seltice Way; The Porch Public House, a pub owned by the owners of Moon Time Bistro in Coeur d'Alene and offering a similar menu, at 1658 Miles Avenue in Hayden Lake.

### **Shoshone County**

- The U.S. Small Business Administration recognized Brenda and Larry Stinson of Kellogg as the North Idaho Business Persons of the Year. The Stinsons opened the Silver Needle in 1979 to make protective gloves and other safety clothing for local miners. Over the years, they began selling safety clothing for a variety of industries around the globe. More than 30 people work at the Silver Needle.
- Silverton, an unincorporated town on Interstate 90 west of Osburn, recently received a \$475,000 CDBG to upgrade its sewage system, serving about 700 people.

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